



## DRAFT MEMO

TO: City Council Members,  
Mayor Miro Weinberger  
Parks and Recreation Commissioners

FROM: John Bossange, Chair, Bike Path Task Force on behalf of the Task Force

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

RE: Bike Path Task Force Update

Today you are receiving the final copy of the 2012 Burlington Bike Path Feasibility Study, in full, prepared by RSG (Resource Systems Group), Inc. for the Parks & Recreation Department. Included herein is the final recommendation on guiding principles and strategies for moving the implementation of the Study forward. This study was initiated by a City Council resolution on September 13, 2010.

The Bike Path Task Force has spent numerous hours over the past year-and-a-half to clarify the details of the Study and to guide it toward final implementation, through a series of public information and input sessions, subcommittee work, and meetings of the committee as a whole.

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

While the Study details the improvements, the Task Force has reviewed and endorsed the policy recommendations and has specified its recommendation on funding options to help guide development that could begin as early as spring, 2013.

Policy recommendations include:

- **Updating Path Design Standards:** 11' pavement with appropriate sub-base and surface to support maintenance and emergency vehicles, with 2' unpaved shoulder on each side of the path wherever possible
- **Improving Intersection Crossings:** Calm traffic on all approaches and use the least traffic control that is effective at path-roadway intersections
- **Improving Path Safety:** Realign the path in specific locations to remove blind corners and substandard intersections based on safety and user experience, and use 4" yellow center striping and "Keep Right" pavement markings.
- **Increasing Connectivity:** Formalize certain connections to improve traffic flow and/or improve maintenance and access
- **Enhancing Amenities:** Target state, federal and private sources of funding to create learning stations, interpretive signs, trailhead kiosks, etc.
- **Maintaining the Path:** Adopt a partner maintenance and management plan that enables consistent and intentional annual work plans to sustain the integrity of the Bike Path, connector trails, and corridor

Culling through the copious volume of Bike Path assessment details and improvement options has allowed the Task Force to fully understand the costs and benefits to those improvements, leading to specific funding plan recommendations. If the recommendations are adopted, successful Path construction could begin next spring, as previously mentioned.

### CAPITAL FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

As the Task Force has studied ways to fund these improvements, it has used these guiding principles:

- **Shared Responsibility** – Recognizing that the path is used by a broad cross section of people (residents and visitors alike) and that the path benefits a broad array of stakeholders (area businesses, public event users, residents, etc), we believe that the funding for the path's rehabilitation must be shared among different stakeholders.
- **Opportunity for Charitable Giving** – Residents, businesses and visitors all value this resource, but there has not been a clear and simple way for people and businesses to be able to contribute to the trail. The Task Force collectively believes this must be a critical component moving forward. Furthermore, we think this could be a great first project for a Burlington Parks Foundation.
- **Continued Pursuit of State & Federal Funding** – There are many potential sources for state and federal funding. The City along with its partners needs to continue pursuing all promising funding leads for this project. We applaud the City for quickly applying for Tiger IV funding and see many ways of pitching state and federal participation toward shoreline stabilization, outdoor education, wellness initiatives, natural resource development, etc....
- **Importance of City Leadership** – While we would like as much funding to come from private, state and federal sources, we acknowledge that there will need to be a significant local municipal portion. Furthermore, we understand that securing municipal funding upfront will demonstrate the City's commitment and help us secure other funding as we move forward.
- **Preference for TIF Financing Over a Bond** – We appreciated our meeting with the Mayor and the discussion regarding the use of Tax Increment Financing as a funding source to minimize property tax impacts on the City.

### PROPOSED CAPITAL FUNDING

#### A. Rehabilitation:

|          |  |                    |
|----------|--|--------------------|
| Funding: | *Tax Increment Financing/General Obligation Bond | \$7,000,000*       |
|          | 1% Rooms and Meals Tax (3 years only)            | \$3,600,000        |
|          | <u>Private donations (via Parks Foundation)</u>  | <u>\$1,000,000</u> |
|          | Total:   | \$11,600,000       |

#### B. Enhancements:

|          |                                 |                    |
|----------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Funding: | Rehabilitation Plan             | \$11,600,000       |
|          | <u>State and Federal Grants</u> | <u>\$4,200,000</u> |
|          | Total:                          | \$15,800,000       |

\* We suggest this amount be covered by a combination of Tax Increment Financing and a Bond. The exact amount of the Bond should be determined by the amount of funding gained by maximizing the allowance under TIF guidelines and approval process. This combination should be confirmed by July 1, 2012.

## PROPOSED MAINTENANCE

The Task Force understands the importance of on-going maintenance to preserve the capital investments made to the bike path. We believe a combination of funding sources will insure the safety and the good condition of the path for years to come. The existing Pennies for Parks funds allocated to path maintenance should continue as will our desire to solicit private donations via the Parks Foundation. However, these two sources will not be enough. To ensure the long-term stewardship of Burlington's bike path network, we recommend a ½ cent dedicated property tax to secure the necessary base maintenance funding.

### C. Maintenance:

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| ½ cent Dedicated Property Tax            | \$180,000        |
| Existing Parks and Recreation Commitment | \$30,000         |
| Private donations (via Parks Foundation) | \$20,000         |
| <b>Total:</b>                            | <b>\$230,000</b> |

## ANTICIPATED YEARLY COSTS

|  | <b>**Sample 5.5 Million Bond</b> | <b>½ Cent Property Tax</b> |
|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Residential Properties:</b>                                   |                                  |                            |
| Rate:  | 0.0081/\$100                     | 0.005/\$100                |
| \$250,000  | \$20.26                          | \$12.50                    |
| \$300,000  | \$24.31                          | \$15.00                    |
| \$350,000  | \$28.36                          | \$17.50                    |
| \$400,000  | \$32.41                          | \$20.00                    |
| \$500,000  | \$40.51                          | \$25.00                    |
| <b>Commercial Values:</b>  |                                  |                            |
| Rate:  | 0.009723/\$100                   |                            |
| \$500,000  | \$48.62                          | \$30.00                    |
| \$600,000  | \$58.34                          | \$36.00                    |
| \$1,000,000  | \$97.23                          | \$60.00                    |
| \$5,000,000  | \$405.00                         | \$250.00                   |
| \$10,000,000   | \$810.00                         | \$500.00                   |
| <b>Commercial Values (Residential Properties and Apartments)</b> |                                  |                            |
| Rate:  | 0.0081/\$100                     | 0.005/\$100                |
| \$600,000  | \$48.60                          | \$30.00                    |
| \$700,000  | \$56.70                          | \$35.00                    |
| \$1,000,000  | \$81.00                          | \$50.00                    |

**\*\* Sample General Obligation Bond, if needed, of 5.5 million**  
 Annual Payment: \$284,726 (20 years at 4%)

## **CONCLUSION**

In our public forums, our meetings with key stakeholders, and conversations across the city, we've heard a consistent message from residents and the business community that the rehabilitation of the Burlington bike path is a critical action needed to maintain the vitality of our City and should be done in a manner that continues the momentum built by the Task Force over the last two years.

The Task Force acknowledges and appreciates the multitude of time sensitive financial challenges presently facing the City. While the Task Force's work has been completed and the Task Force will disband after its presentation to the full City Council this summer, those of us who have been involved in the Task Force look forward to collaborating with our new Mayor to efficiently secure the funding necessary to rehabilitate this amenity that improves our health, our access to Lake Champlain, our economy and our quality of life.

With significant groundwork laid, we ask the City Council and the Mayor to evaluate the opportunity for a sunsetted, three year 1% Rooms and meals tax. We also believe that, if necessary, a local ballot item for the funding of the bike path be should be offered to the voters to maintain the positive energy and public support gained from the Task Force's work with residents and the business community city-wide.

Please be assured that once a financing proposal is presented to the voters, many members of this Task Force will be actively involved in educating voters on this important issue.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve the City in this effort. Please let us know if you have any questions, comments, or a need for more information.